

SCRIBE OF NAZI TERROR GRADUATES

Joseph Rogel, 65, prize winning poet and survivor of the Auschwitz death camp, graduates with a B.A. from Concordia University this year.

He grew up in Tarnov, Poland, where he started work for the family shirt factory. At the age of 27, he was arrested by the Gestapo and was sent to Auschwitz, the infamous extermination camp.

Recalling those days, he said: "First there were showers and then roll call. Sometimes we had to stand in the rain for two or three hours. Then there was an inspection. If the camp commanders didn't like a certain face -- for no explainable reason -- the prisoner was taken away to the gas chambers."

Those horrible days still remain the substance of his poetry.

His most recent book, Poems For My Mother was published by Concordia University. Last year, he was honored by the Canadian Jewish Congress at a special evening commemorating the Holocaust.

His first book of verse, Auschwitz A18260, won the Zvi Kessel Prize in Mexico in 1951. His later book, Confessions of an Auschwitz Number, was widely acclaimed.

The number, of which he writes, is still tatooed on his left arm.

Rogel was rescued by the Soviet Army in 1945 and moved to Bucharest, where he met his wife Klara, also an inmate of a Nazi concentration camp.

The Rogels arrived in Montreal in 1948 where he operated a coffee stand at St-Lawrence and Mount Royal, retiring in 1971 because of heart trouble.

He enrolled at Dawson College, graduating in 1973. He won a scholarship at Concordia, where he studied creative writing on the Loyola campus.

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Note: Joseph Rogel will be at Convocation Sunday, June 6 on the Loyola campus at 1:30 p.m. His phone number is 488-4178. His address: 452 Westminster N.

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